Title Registration Form

Campbell Collaboration Social Welfare Coordinating Group

1. Title of review

(Suggested format: [*intervention/s*] for [*outcome/s*] in [*problem/population*] in [*location/situation*]
Example: behavioural therapy for reducing violence among adolescents in institutions)

Empowerment-based after-school programmes for improving self-efficacy and positive connections for adolescents (ages 10-19).

2. Background and objective of this review

(Briefly describe the problem and the intervention)

This review aims to improve empirical understanding of the use of youth empowerment as a strategy for Positive Youth Development in the context of after-school programmes. With the support of caring adults, empowerment-based after-school programmes engage young people in organisational decision-making or programme design as a characteristic of their involvement in safe, positive, and structured activities after school hours.

Reference to the empowerment and agency of young people has become increasingly common over recent decades. The concept has been embraced at some of the highest levels of influence, including the European Union (Resolution on Youth Participation (1999)), the United Nations (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12), the United States government (White House's "Helping America's Youth" initiative), the United Kingdom government (Youth Matters paper), the World Bank (Young People Speak Out Report, 2007), and the philanthropic community[1]. Yet, the question as to whether empowerment-based approaches actually result in improved outcomes for youth, as advocates suggest, appears to be largely unanswered. It is also unclear whether there are certain conditions under which empowerment-based approaches are more (or less) effective.

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[1] Rosen, M., & Maureen, S. (2001). *Changing the face of giving: An assessment of youth philanthropy*. San Francisco, CA: James G. Irvine Foundation.

After-school programmes represent one channel for empowerment-based interventions in youth services. Crime and risky behaviour peak for adolescents after school hours[2]. The dilemma presents cause for identifying effective approaches for reaching out to adolescents and facilitating more positive developmental outcomes and connections during the hours they need them most. The empowerment process may help make after-school programmes more relevant and effective for adolescents.

Definitions

This review operates from the definition of *youth empowerment* which has been used by the World Bank and UNICEF: "Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of young people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives." Given this definition, the World Bank ties in *self-power* and *independence* as core features of empowerment.

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is not necessarily synonymous with youth empowerment, but the concept represents a larger, relevant movement in youth services that generally involves an asset-based approach to working with youth, which emphasises the presence of positive environments, prosocial activities, and supportive relationships in young people's lives. The PYD emphasis stresses processes that recognise and build on young people's strengths and competencies. Some definitions explicitly stipulate 'empowerment' (youth participation or youth-adult partnerships in driving programming) whilst others do not.

Proponents of empowerment suggest that the participation of young people in organisational decision-making and programme design is a critical feature in the developmental process. They argue that, to truly capitalise on young people's assets, youth must be genuinely supported and entrusted with opportunities to influence the processes that affect their lives and communities[3]. To this end, proponents of empowerment believe that participatory processes help young people develop the competencies (e.g. self-efficacy, prosocial behaviours, trust, good decision-making skills, etc.) and positive connections (e.g. to school and community) that prepare them for adulthood better than deficit-based interventions for which the *primary* objective is to "fix" a young person's problem behaviour(s).

Whilst valuable in other respects, past reviews of evidence on PYD have used broad criteria and have not focused on the impact of empowerment processes in particular. A PYD review, for example, by Catalano and colleagues (2002)[4] included evaluations of any programme with objectives that fit within at least one of fifteen constructs, none of which necessitated youth empowerment. This leaves the field

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[2] Snyder, H., Sickmund, M., & Poe-Yamagata, E. (1996). Juvenile offenders and victims: 1996 update on violence. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

[3] Jennings, L., Parra-Medina, D., Messias, D., & McLoughlin, K. (2006) Toward a critical social theory of youth empowerment. *Journal of Community Practice*. 14(1/2).

[4] Catalano, R. F., Berglund, M. L., Ryan, J. A. M., Lonczak, H. S., & Hawkins, J. D. (2002). Positive youth development in the United States: Research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs. *Prevention & Treatment, 5*(1).

to depend on theoretical and anecdotal evidence as to whether and under what conditions youth empowerment works.

Additionally, the Catalano et al review was limited to the United States and did not include evaluations for which results found negative or no effects. Past research has demonstrated that unintended harm has been caused by some youth interventions[5]. This underscores the importance of understanding the consequences – positive, negative, or neutral – of empowerment-based after-school programmes. This review will synthesise evidence from includable evaluations regardless of their findings, from a broader range of countries, with a specific focus on empowerment-based after-school interventions, and using an explicit and highly sensitive search strategy.

3. Define the population
(Who is included and who is excluded?)

Adolescents, ages 10-19, 'vulnerable' and 'mainstream' populations, males and females, in OECD countries.

4. Define the intervention/s
(What is given, by whom, and for how long? What are the comparison conditions?)

This review defines empowerment-based after-school programmes as safe, structured activities that convene regularly outside of school hours, involve the presence of a supportive adult, and formally integrate youth participation in organisational decision-making and/or programme design. For the purpose of this review, the last defining feature distinguishes youth development after-school programmes as 'empowerment-based'.

Interventions that meet the aforementioned criteria can involve a range of activities, including volunteering, advocacy, recreation, life skills, vocational preparation, and arts. 'After-school programmes' disqualifies classroom activities, conferences, short-term camps, therapeutic interventions, residential programmes, and juvenile justice programmes.

After-school programmes that do not formally involve adolescents in committees, boards, councils, workgroups, staff roles, or other leadership bodies meant to influence programme decision-making as an intentional part of their involvement in the intervention would not qualify as 'empowerment-based'. Whilst an imperfect benchmark for empowerment given qualitative, attitudinal variations in the actual depth, atmosphere, and authenticity of youth empowerment across programmes, this criterion will

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[5] Arnold, M. E., & Hughes, J. N. (1999). First do no harm: Adverse effects of grouping deviant youth for skills training. *Journal of School Psychology, 37*(1), 99-115.

provide a relatively clear, minimal standard that can generally be identified from programme descriptions. To some extent, variations in empowerment can be explored in data analysis.

Comparison groups may involve no treatment or interventions that do not involve youth in organisational decision-making and/or programme design.

5. Outcome/s

(What are the intended effects of the intervention? Primary and secondary outcomes should all be mentioned.)

Primary outcomes will include:

1) *Sense of self-efficacy.* Self-efficacy is defined as the perceived ability to achieve a desired action[6]. Measures may look at various domains of self-efficacy, such as social, academic, and emotional self-efficacy as the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (SEQ-C).

2) *Positive connections.*

  (a) *Connectedness to school* (e.g. feelings of connectedness, completion, attendance, engagement).

  (b) *Connectedness to community* (e.g. feelings of connectedness, volunteerism, and engagement with community institutions). May use survey instruments such as the READY Tool (2006) and the National Household Education Survey – Civic Involvement Module (1996).

Secondary outcomes will include:

1) *Problem behaviours.* These may include delinquency, drug/alcohol abuse, school dropout, school suspension/expulsion, sexual activity, teenage pregnancy, and gang membership (e.g., as measured in the National Longitudinal Survey for Youth, 1997). Whilst the emphasis of youth empowerment and positive youth development focuses primarily on strengthening assets over reducing problem behaviours, the politics of social interventions often require that rates of problem behaviours be measured as indicators of programme effectiveness across youth services. Furthermore, proponents of empowerment and positive youth development suggest that strengthening primary (positive) outcomes for young people leads to a reduction in problem behaviours. Inclusion of such measures as secondary outcomes may help explore this potential linkage.

2) *Educational achievement.* Achievement is commonly measured by basic skills competence in reading and math, secondary degree completion, and entrance/degree completion in higher education.

3) *Economic status.* Where longitudinal data are available, a long-term impact measure would involve the study participants' employment status, wages, or average earnings into adulthood.

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[6] Bandura, A., Pastorellia, C., Barbaranelli, C., & Caprara, G. (1999). Self-efficacy pathways to childhood depression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* **76**(2).

6. Methodology
(What types of studies are to be included and excluded? Please describe eligible study designs, control/comparison groups, measures, and duration of follow-ups.)

Randomised controlled trials, quasi-randomised controlled trials and nonrandomised controlled studies of empowerment-based after-school programmes compared to other forms of youth interventions or to 'no-intervention' in which participants were prospectively assigned to study groups and in which control group outcomes were measured concurrently with intervention group outcomes.

All relevant measures will be assessed and long-term follow-up will be sought.

7. Review team
(List names of those who will be cited as authors on the final publication)

Lead reviewer	
This is the person who develops and co-ordinates the review team, discusses and assigns roles for individual members of the review team, liaises with the editorial base and takes responsibility for the on-going updates of the review	Name: Matthew Morton Title: DPhil Candidate Affiliation: University of Oxford, Centre for Evidence Based Intervention Address: 32 Wellington Square City: Oxford State, Province or County: Oxfordshire Postal Code: OX1 2ER Country: United Kingdom Phone: +44 (0)1865 270325 Mobile: +44 (0)7975512792 Email: matthew.morton@socres.ox.ac.uk
Co-author There should be at least one co-author	Name: Dr. Paul Montgomery Affiliation: University of Oxford, Centre for Evidence Based Interventions

8. Roles and responsibilities

Please give brief description of content and methodological expertise within the review team. It is recommended to have at least one person on the review team who has content expertise, at least one person who has methodological expertise and at least one person who has statistical expertise. It is also recommended to have one person with information retrieval expertise. Please note that this is the *recommended optimal* review team composition.

- Content: Morton has nine years of experience in youth development, primarily working with nonprofit organisations and foundations in the United States, Guatemala, Colombia, and Uganda.

- Systematic review methods: Montgomery is the author of several Cochrane and Campbell Reviews.

- Statistical analysis: Morton and Montgomery have some statistical skills, but some assistance from Campbell in this area may be required depending on the data.

- Information retrieval: Authors can perform their own searches.

9. Potential conflicts of interest

(E.g., have any of the authors been involved in the development of relevant interventions, primary research, or prior published reviews on the topic?)

None for Montgomery. Morton, while not currently employed or serving in any formal roles with relevant interventions, has previously helped with the management and design of such empowerment-based youth development interventions.

10. Support

Do you need support in any of these areas: methodology and causal inference, systematic searches, coding, statistics (meta-analysis)?

We welcome a crosscheck of the search terms that we think will be problematic and prompt methodology advice is always welcome.

11. Funding

Do you receive any financial support? If so, where from? If not, are you planning to apply for funding? Where?

No.

11. Preliminary timeframe

Approximate date for submission of Draft Protocol (please note this should be no longer than 6 month after title approval. If the protocol is not submitted by then, the review area is opened up for other reviewers):

We expect to submit the protocol in July 2008 and the completed review in September 2008.

Title registration submission dates:
25 June 2008
29 July 2008

Title registration approval date:
30 August 2008
Title amended 21 December 2009